

The Atoning Blood of Christ.

BY CHRISTIAN HOPE.

"It is the blood that maketh an atonement for your souls."—Lev. 17: 11. "The life is in the blood, therefore I have given it unto you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls."—Lev. 17: 14.

THE writer of the epistle to the Hebrews wrote plainly: "Without shedding of blood is no remission." Heb. 9: 22. Almost all things had, for the Israelites under the law, to be purged with blood. There was absolutely no remission of sins without the shedding of blood. The covenant, the book, the Ark, the tabernacle, and the people were all dedicated and cleansed by application of blood. The magnitude of sacrificial bloodshed knew no bounds in Israel. It was shed for individual sins day by day, as well as yearly for the nations. Kings, priests, and the common people were all subject to this rule. They knew absolutely no exception. Wherever God had to spare man's life, it was said: "I will see the blood and will not suffer the destroyer to come into your house to smite you." Ex. 12: 13, 23. Where forgiveness of sins was wanted, God prescribed: "The priest shall make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clear from all your sins before the Lord." Lev. 13: 30. This is the law and testimony of God, regarding the sins of his people, without reference to original sin, transplanted through Adam. The blood is counted by the Lord for the life of all flesh; hence to shed blood is to take life, to apply blood is to apply life. The blood given for atonement,—for the soul of man,—means that some perfect, innocent creature gave its life in exchange for the sinner, and suffered as his substitute the penalty, death having been pronounced on him for sin.

The word *atone* carries the original meaning, "to exchange, to pacify, to render satisfaction for sin." This ac-

cords with God's doing, when he killed animals and clothed Adam and Eve (Gen. 3: 21), and when he liberated Isaac for a ram. Gen. 22: 12, 13. This is his meaning all through the Mosaic law, as types to the wonderful exchange on Calvary; where his beloved Son died for the human race, that the death, coming through Adam, might fall on him, and man might thus go free. So eternal life to man is a free gift, obtained through Christ's death, Rom. 6: 23, and God becomes man's friend, and man God's heir when he, like Abraham, makes use of God's prepared lamb for his everlasting sacrifice when he, like Adam, accepts of God's provision. Gen. 3: 21; Lev. 27: 30.

Man becoming righteous before God is not so by the works he does, but by continuing in the sacrifice. Rom. 4: 3. Paul says: "He that is dead is freed from sin," Rom. 6: 7, that is, he paid the penalty of the law, and is as if he never had sinned,—justified in the face of the law. If this, through Christ, had not been effected for the human race, there would have been no hope of a general resurrection from the dead, nor a second death spoken of, but in speaking of a second, the first becomes old, decayed and is ready to vanish away. Heb. 8: 13. If that is true of a just and holy covenant, how much more of God's and man's enemy? But the blood of beasts could not accomplish this; it could only serve as a type till Christ would come, a perfect man. Once, in the fullness of time, he died, the just for, or in behalf of, the unjust. Heb. 9: 14, 25, 28. God in him killed the human race, counting them all dead in him, and sacrifice ceased forever. If one died for all, then all were dead (2 Cor. 5: 14), otherwise sacrifices would continue even to the present day. Heb. 9: 25, 26. Having ceased to be offered, his sacrifice must be able to take away conscience of sins (not only of sin) forever. Heb. 10: 2.

Once settling all, Paul proclaims: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself; not imputing their trespasses unto them and had committed unto us the word of rec-

onciliation, for he had made him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made God's righteousness in him." 2 Cor. 6: 19, 21. This is the glorious effect of God's exchange: (1) Christ is made sin for man; (2) man can by this be made God's righteousness in Christ. So made God's righteousness, he becomes God's ambassador for Christ, as though God "beseech (just think of it) you by us. We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." 2 Cor. 5:20.

Christ was to die for the nation, and also for God's children scattered abroad (John 11: 51, 52), that he should be the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. John 1:29; Isa. 53. He bore our sins in his own body on the tree. 1 Pet. 2:24. He did this while we were yet his enemies. Rom. 5: 10. He redeemed us with his precious blood (1 Pet. 1: 18, 19), washed us from our sins (not only sin) and made us kings and priests before God." Rev. 1: 65. It pleased God to put him to grief and bruise him, and make his soul an offering for sin (Isa. 53: 10), to wound him for our transgressions, to bruise him for our iniquities, to let him bear our griefs and carry our sorrows. Isa. 53: 4. Continually he bore his people's iniquity. Isa. 53: 10. Christ entered willingly into the exchange. He said: "Suffer it to be so now." Matt. 3: 15. "Ought not Christ to suffer these things?" Luke 24: 26. So fully did he enter into man's position, that he, as a real and true substitute, exclaimed, "Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me; they are more than hair upon my head." Ps. 40: 12. God was so pleased with the result that he exclaimed: "Their sins (not only sin) will I remember no more." Heb. 8: 12.

It is evident from this that the question of sin, sins and death, in relation to mankind, is fully met and forever settled, in Christ Godward, that is, God has accepted it and became reconciled to the world. Now the people of the world, as individuals, have to accept and be reconciled to God's plan. Then the Father, Son and Holy Ghost united will make them God's righteousness in Christ. The church is insti-

tuted for this purpose; her ministers sent out with heaven's prescribed means, and attendance of angels for the help of them that shall inherit salvation. Heb. 1: 14; 2 Cor. 5: 20; Eph. 3: 10. He gave solemn charge to the church and her ministry not to neglect to teach all he commanded (Matt. 28: 19), nor to change his instructions and designs, nor add thereto. Gal. 1: 8, 9; Rev. 22: 18, 29. The result thus obtained is to make one,—to make alike,—to make alike precious. Planted by baptism into Christ they are engrafted into the true olive tree. Rom. 6: 5; 11: 19. All ordinances, every word of Christ, is bread for the developing of God-given life (Matt. 4: 4), so that all who, with open face, "behold the glory of God are changed into the same image from glory to glory." 2 Cor. 3: 18. They are changed to the image of Christ (Rom. 8: 29), so much so that, as they have borne the earthly image of Adam, they shall bear the image of the heavenly. 1 Cor. 15: 49.

In closing, please take a glance at Christ and his people. He was, while here, poor, despised, persecuted; a man of sorrow for the sins of others, and finally killed. Isa. 53. So are they in every land and nation when they fully imitate him. John 15: 18, 21; 16: 1, 2; Rom. 9: 2, 3. He is full of power and glory. Rev. 1: 13, 15; 19: 11, 13. They, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye shall put on immortality and power (1 Cor. 15: 43, 54), reign with Christ (Rev. 20: 4; Rom. 8: 17; 2 Thess. 2: 12) and judge the world. Matt. 19: 27, 29; 1 Cor. 6: 23.

Dear reader, farewell; we have worked for you, shown you God's love and what it can make you; shown you Christ's work, when he became sin for you and your possibility to become God's righteousness in him. Will you do it, and do it now? I am interested in you; it is my duty to beseech you, in Christ's place. Oh! be reconciled to God!

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